

June 4 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

greater responsibility for the children's success; and

—promoting the use of mediation to resolve disagreements between parents and schools.

This bill also gives school officials the tools they need to ensure that the Nation's schools are safe and conducive to learning for all children, while scrupulously protecting the rights of children with disabilities. It also includes a substantial commitment from the Federal Government to support the professional development of special and regular education teachers who work with children with disabilities, research and technological innovations to improve their education, the training of parents, and the provision of technical assistance.

This bipartisan legislation is the result of a unique process involving the Congress, the Department of Education, parents, educators, the disability community, and other interested parties. I thank all who played a part in this great achievement. Successful implementation of the revised IDEA is the key to the future for children with disabilities and it will help them become successful and contributing members of their communities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 4, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 5, approved June 4, was assigned Public Law No. 105-17.

Statement on Supplemental Disaster Assistance Legislation *June 4, 1997*

In moving ahead on this flawed legislation, the Republican leadership is once again delaying the disaster assistance needed by people and communities in the Dakotas, Minnesota, and 30 other States. With individuals, families, and businesses awaiting the assistance they need to rebuild, I urge the Republican leadership to set politics aside and pass a clean disaster assistance bill.

If the Republican majority is set on this course of adding contentious and extraneous provisions, they should send me this bill as quickly as possible. I will veto it as soon as it arrives and send it back so they can send me a clean disaster assistance bill immediately that keeps aid flowing to those in need. Americans in need should not have to endure this unnecessary delay.

Letter to the Federal Election Commission Requesting Action To End the Soft Money System in Domestic Politics *June 4, 1997*

To the Members of the Federal Election Commission:

I am writing to you, pursuant to 11 CFR Part 200, to request that you take action under your existing statutory authority to ban "soft money" and end the system under which both political parties compete to raise unlimited sums from individuals, labor unions, and corporations.

The rules governing our system of financing Federal election campaigns are sorely out of date. Enacted more than two decades ago when election campaigns were much less expensive,

the rules have been overtaken by dramatic changes in the nature and cost of campaigns and the accompanying flood of money.

Today, money is raised and spent in ways that simply were not contemplated when the Congress last overhauled our campaign finance laws. We must bring the rules up to date to reflect the changes in elections and campaigning.

An important step in this process would be to change the rules governing the use and solicitation of "soft money"—funds not subject to

the contribution limitations and prohibitions of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (FECA). Currently Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations (11 CFR 106.5) allow political parties to raise and spend soft money in elections involving State and Federal candidates by providing an allocation formula between Federal and non-Federal expenses incurred by party committees.

These regulations, and limited additional guidance provided through advisory opinions, are the basis upon which party committees make expenditures and raise funds with respect to Federal and State elections. The use of soft money by party committees is largely based on the direction provided in these regulations.

Whatever the merit of these regulations at the time they were adopted, it has become abundantly clear today that they are no longer adequate to the task of regulating campaigns. The role of soft money has grown dramatically in the past several elections so that by the 1996 elections the two parties raised more than \$250 million, more than triple the total of 4 years before.

The current allocation system, in short, is simply outmoded. Accordingly, I propose that the FEC adopt new rules requiring that candidates for Federal office and national parties be permitted to raise and spend only "hard money"—funds subject to the restrictions, contribution limits, and reporting requirements of FECA.

The soft money ban I seek achieves similar goals as provisions of the "Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 1997," introduced by Senators John McCain and Russell Feingold, and Representatives Christopher Shays and Martin Meehan. Specifically, I am requesting that the FEC consider new rulemaking to accomplish the following:

1. Prohibit national political parties (and their congressional campaign committees or agents) from soliciting or receiving any funds not subject to the limitations or prohibitions of FECA. (This action would preclude, for example, contributions directly from corporate or union treasuries, or contributions from individuals in excess of the amount an individual can give to a national party's Federal account.)

2. Prohibit any Federal officeholder or candidate (and his or her agents) from soliciting or receiving any funds not subject to the limitations or prohibitions of FECA.

3. Provide that any expenditure by any national, State, or local political party during a Federal election year for any activity that influences a Federal election (including any voter registration or get-out-the-vote drive, generic advertising, or any communication that refers to a Federal candidate) must be paid for from funds subject to FECA. (This would end the allocation system, currently authorized by the FEC, under which hard and soft money are mixed for campaign activities that affect both State and Federal elections.)

These steps, available to you under your existing statutory authority, will enable our election laws to catch up with the reality of the way elections are financed today, and along with new campaign finance reform legislation, will take significant strides toward restoring public confidence in the campaign finance process.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 5. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Statement on Requesting Federal Election Commission Action To End the Soft Money System in Domestic Politics

June 5, 1997

Today I have asked the Federal Election Commission to act, within its current legal authority, to end the soft money system. Currently, both parties compete to raise large sums from corporations, individuals, and labor unions.

There is too much money in politics, and the problem worsens with every election. This escalating arms race must stop, and I am determined that we will reform campaign finances, by every means we can.